

**CHARLIE BAKER**  
Governor



**KARYN POLITO**  
Lt. Governor

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**Baker-Polito Administration Recaps Education Tour**

*Recent events highlighted commitment to Empowerment Zones, workforce skills education and a tuition-free pilot program for higher education*



Click [here](#) to watch

**FITCHBURG**— Following a visit to Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High

School today, Governor Charlie Baker released a video capturing moments from a statewide education tour, where he and members of the administration visited elementary, vocational technical and early education schools to highlight successful programs and announce new programs aimed at college affordability and completion.

“We have spent the last month in classrooms across Massachusetts, and our administration is proud of the hard work invested in learning and skill building throughout the system,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “We will continue to focus on opportunities, from early education to affordable college tuition rates, to strengthen every community and provide a bright future for our students.”

On May 16<sup>th</sup>: Governor Baker and Secretary Peyser visited the [Forest Park Middle School in Springfield](#) to hear from teachers and principals about the school district’s improvement efforts through the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership. The Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership, finishing its second academic year, is an innovative approach the school district adopted voluntarily in an effort to improve underperforming schools.

On May 24<sup>th</sup>: Governor Baker and Secretary Peyser visited [Bentley Elementary School in Salem](#) to hear about its successful turnaround efforts; also visited a Head Start program located at the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council; and on May 31 toured Leominster High School’s Career and Technical Innovation Center to see equipment the school purchased with a \$227,000 Skills Capital Grant awarded last year.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>: Governor Baker announced the expansion of a [dual enrollment program between Massachusetts Maritime Academy and the John D. O’Bryant School of Math and Science in Roxbury](#). College officials pledged to fully-fund financial aid needs for qualified students from the John D. O’Bryant High School who are enrolled in the dual enrollment program and admitted to the Academy.

On May 30<sup>th</sup>: Governor Baker and Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh announced the creation of [The Boston Bridge](#), a tuition-free pilot program for 2017 high school graduates who live in the City of Boston. The goal of the historic partnership between the City and the Commonwealth is to eliminate financial barriers that prevent low-income students from going to college full-time, in order to boost college completion rates.

“Boston Bridge is not just about access to college; it’s not just about low-cost or affordable college. It’s about college success and completion. This is about encouraging students and providing incentives for students to go to school full-time and complete on time,” **Education Secretary James Peyser said**.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>: Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, along with Secretary Peyser, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash and Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Ronald L. Walker, II [awarded \\$2.2 million in Skills Capital Grants to 10 vocational high schools](#). Since creating the grants last year, the Baker-Polito Administration has awarded more than \$26.4 million in Skills Capital Grants to schools that partner with local businesses to align curriculum and credentials with businesses' demand to maximize hiring opportunities.

Governor Baker wrapped up the tour today with a visit to Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School to see the school's new veterinarian facility. Monty Tech received a \$136,000 Skills Capital Grant award last year, which helped the school develop the new veterinarian program. Students enrolled in the school's construction program built a 7,500-square-foot vet facility, which will open in September.

Since taking office in 2015, the Baker-Polito Administration has proposed increasing spending on all K-12 schools by more than \$318 million. Earlier this year, after years of nominal increases for providers, Governor Baker proposed a 6% rate increase for early education providers, worth more than \$28 million, which includes plans to increase annual support for infant and toddler providers by more than \$9 million. Massachusetts was recently ranked #1 in the country for education by U.S. News and World Report, and also tops the list for best performing states on Advanced Placement Exams.

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